

**For Immediate Release**  
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Contact: 262-284-8170  
info@washozwi.gov

## **WASHINGTON OZAUKEE PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT REPRIORITIZES PANDEMIC RESPONSE**

*Washington & Ozaukee Counties-*

On January 21, 2022, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) released a memo to local health departments regarding the prioritization of highest impact public health response activities for COVID-19 stating the following:

- Data collection from individual patients through standardized case investigations (contact tracing) is no longer expected or required for every Wisconsin resident who tests positive for COVID-19.
- COVID-19 vaccination, including boosters, remains our most powerful tool for minimizing hospitalizations and deaths.
- Supporting access to testing and educating community members about the importance of layered mitigation strategies are also key activities that should be prioritized, depending on the needs of local communities.

Data collection requirements for case investigation have changed and public response to case investigation has changed with the length of the pandemic. The average percentage of Washington and Ozaukee County residents who are eligible for standardized case investigation and unable to reach by the department has increased from 35% in 2021 to 43% in 2022. Effective immediately, the Washington Ozaukee Public Health Department (WOPHD) will cease contact tracing of all individuals who test positive for COVID-19. Efforts to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 in the community will focus primarily on vaccination, testing, education, and outbreak investigation in high-risk congregate settings. The department will continue to provide outbreak support for long-term care facilities, schools, and local businesses as needed.

Testing is recommended for individuals with close contact to a confirmed or suspected case of COVID - 19 and individuals with signs or symptoms of COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status. The WOPHD

will continue to focus its efforts on providing individuals with access to testing to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the community. The WOPHD encourages individuals to follow [CDC isolation and quarantine recommendations](#) when exposed to COVID-19.

Electronic lab reporting will represent the main source of surveillance data. The WOPHD will continue to monitor the data and update our website to allow community partners to make informed decisions based on local data.

Information regarding local vaccination and testing options can be found at [www.washozwi.gov](http://www.washozwi.gov). For questions relating to COVID-19, individuals are encouraged to email [info@washozwi.gov](mailto:info@washozwi.gov).